November 2025 Newsletter

www.penbodevets.co.uk/farm

Penbode Farm Vets

Since 1840

You are invited to our annual match day sponsorship at Bude Rugby Club

We hope you can join us for what promises to be a fantastic day of rugby and a complimentary **free drink and hog roast for our clients too.**

Lameness Research

Lameness research reiterates why early pain management leads to health and productivity gains

Lameness affects around a third of the national dairy herd, causing considerable economic losses through its impact on fertility and milk yield, as well as early culling and treatment costs. Yet, despite its impact, little overall progress has been made in reducing its prevalence over the past 20 years. Although non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are being used more widely in lameness treatment, they are still underused for this painful condition.

As such, VetPartners funded Project **FEET** to investigate the perception of pain and use of NSAIDs for conditions caused or associated with lameness in dairy cows, by different members of a farm's mobility team. From past research and clinical experience, we already know there is an increase in successful lameness recovery when mild cases of lameness are detected early and treated straight away with NSAIDs. Even more effective is when the NSAID is given in combination with a foot block and corrective trimming, which more than halves the number of cows that fail to recover. However, this only works in mild or early cases, so early detection and treatment is key.

Led by VetPartners vets, the Project **FEET** study researched the whole farm mobility team: farmers, farm vets, vet techs (VT) and foot trimmers (FT). A total of 210 participants were surveyed, including 80 farmers, 80 vets, 34 FT and 15 VTs.

The findings showed that members of the mobility team had different perceptions around pain and lameness and that increasing collaboration and harnessing skills and knowledge within the team could improve early detection and treatment of lameness, with consequent benefits to cow welfare and production. Farmer perception of lameness was also clearly different to other stakeholders in the mobility team. Farmers consistently scored pain lower than vets and foot trimmers and reported under 10% of their herd were lame at the time of the survey, compared to the national average of 30%. The survey showed that farmer opinion of using NSAIDS was positive overall and that a key reason for using them was that the chance of recovery was increased. Focusing efforts on early treatment gives you better value for the cost of the NSAID by reducing the likelihood of a case of lameness becoming chronic. The chronic cases still benefit from NSAIDs as pain relief, but surgical treatment or culling are often necessary. There is also evidence that by giving NSAIDs to cows at calving, you can reduce lameness in the subsequent lactation, improving welfare and cutting the cost of treatment. A lot of lameness is caused by damage that occurs around calving. Using NSAIDS will reduce inflammation that occurs in the foot following hormonal changes and increased standing times around calving. This can prevent lameness due to lesions such as sole bruising and ulcers from occurring later in lactation.

Training is also a contributing factor. Lameness outcomes can be significantly improved by training all members of your team in mobility scoring so that they are able to identify lame cows effectively.
This can lead to more consistent and effective lameness management strategies; if you see your herd every day, you can become habituated to the overall level of lameness present. Quick identification and preventative care will make a big difference to overall productivity and welfare

Summary – What is Project FEET

This study highlights variance in how pain from lameness is perceived among different members of the 'farm mobility team', including farmers, farm vets, vet techs and foot trimmers.

The research involved data collection from a questionnaire distributed online to UK farmers, farm vets, veterinary technicians (VT) and foot trimmers (FT) – including industry-related bodies such as National Association of Cattle Foot Trimmers and the British Cattle Veterinary Association.

Respondents were asked to describe factors affecting their NSAID use and to score pain associated with 16 scenarios, including diagnoses, conditions and procedures associated with lameness in cows. For most conditions, farmers scored pain lower than vets and VTs and were less likely to use or recommend NSAIDs than vets, VTs and FTs. Farmers rated cow comfort as more important and the cost of drugs as less important in using NSAIDs.

Maximising Herd Health & Productivity: The Benefits of Penbode Dairy Schemes

In today's dairy industry, profitability not only requires a good diet and genetics - it's about being proactive using data to drive herd management and to plan the health and productivity of a herd.

At Penbode Farm Vets, we believe that the best outcomes come from a strong partnership with our clients. Our Dairy Schemes are built around this, providing a structured, supportive, and cost-effective way to maintain optimal herd health while maximising productivity.

1. Tailored Veterinary Support

Every herd is different and management is unique to each farm. The Dairy Schemes offer regular, structured visits with a dedicated vet who knows your farm, your animals, and your goals. We want to work with you to optimise milk sales, focusing on issues such as fertility, lameness, mastitis, infectious disease and young stock health. Our schemes ensure you have expert guidance every step of the way.

Our experienced team of dairy vets and vet techs are always on hand for advice, training, and support, with regular meetings and workshops to keep you informed of the latest industry developments.

2. Data-Driven Decision Making

Using existing data systems, such as NMR, Interherd, or Digifarm (available to scheme members), we can track performance, identify trends, and flag issues early. We can then work together to make informed decisions that lead to real improvements in productivity and profitability.

3. Predictable, Cost-Effective Dairy Scheme Pricing

For a fixed monthly fee, all pre-arranged fertility call-outs are complementary, with the added benefit of discounted hourly rates for routine visits and reduced price medication - plus the peace of mind that the vet/health requirements of the **'Red Tractor'** Farm Assurance are included in the plan (herd health reviews, Milk sure top-ups, Anti-biotic collation reports and disease management -Johnes and BVD).

4. Focus on Prevention, Not Just Treatment

Our schemes are built around preventative herd health planning — helping you reduce antibiotic use, improve welfare, and boost performance. From vaccination protocols to transition cow management, we focus on keeping your animals healthy and productive year-round.

Our **'Champion'** scheme includes all of the inputs discussed above. In our '**Supreme'** package, additional options include quarterly body condition and locomotion scoring, an annual young stock and transition cow audit, 10 worm egg counts and a vet investment report.

Don't Just React — Be Proactive

Joining a Penbode Dairy Scheme is about taking control of your herd's health and future. Whatever your management system there's a scheme to suit your needs

Interested? Get in touch with your local Penbode practice to discuss which scheme would best help your dairy farm thrive.

Penbode Champion Dairy Club

- Free routine fertility call outs
- Reduced Price Farm Medicines
- Reduced hourly rate
- Digifarm Herd Health Analysis
- Antibiotic Reduction Report
- Herd Health Review
- Johne's Control Plan
- BVD Control Plan
- Milksure Top Up

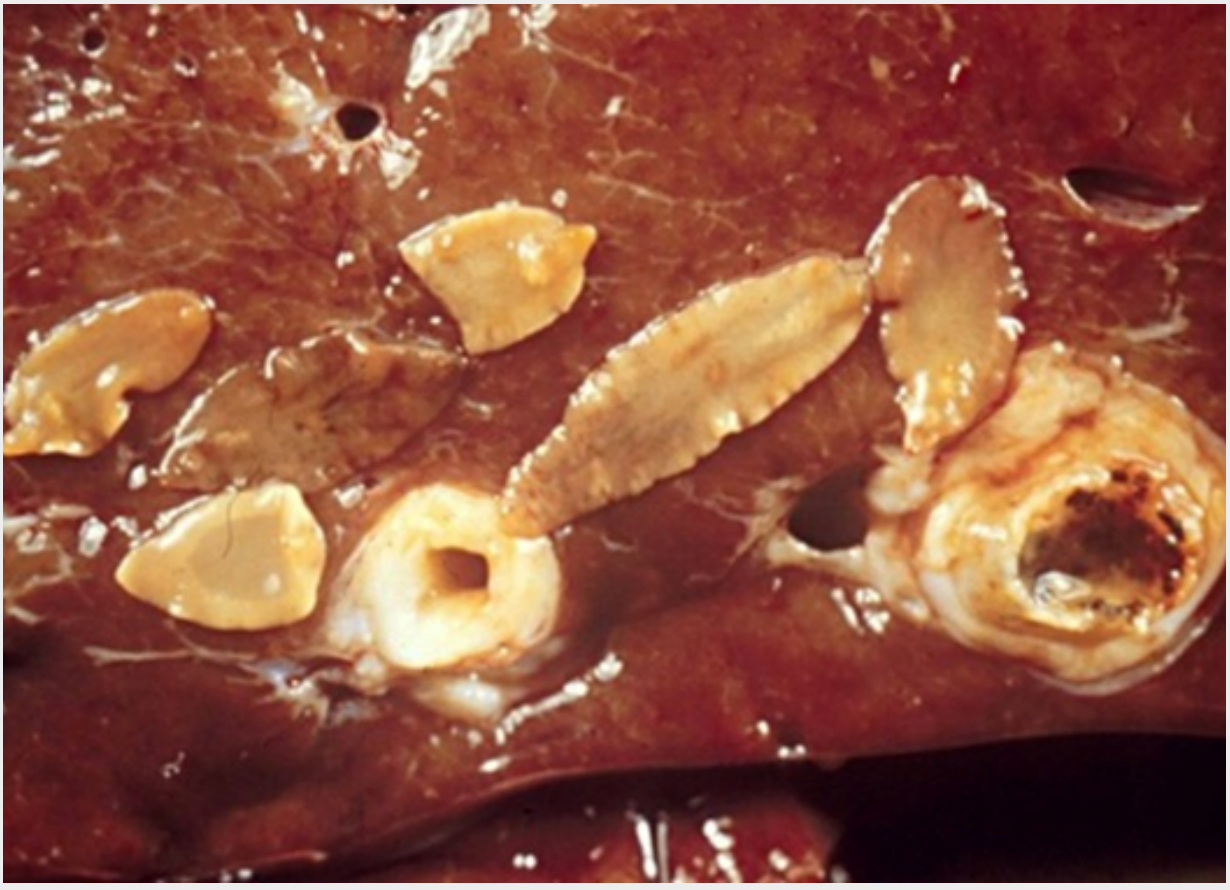
Penbode Champion Dairy Club

For just £66

Fluke
Test before you treat

As autumn sets in, now is a critical time for us to monitor and manage the risk of liver fluke (Fasciola hepatica) in both sheep and cattle. Our weather is becoming increasingly unpredictable meaning snail habitats, and therefore liver fluke, could become more widespread. Take last year for example, many regions faced a prolonged liver fluke season, even into late March 2025.

We've had a notably drier summer this year, however warmer autumn and winters may just be prolonging the risk. It's important to stay aware and test before you treat – fluke treatment depends on the stage and with a moving season it's becoming harder to know what stage you're treating and therefore what treatment will be effective. Please don't throw your money down the drain!



Why test for liver fluke?

Liver fluke can cause serious health and productivity issues in livestock, including reduced weight gain, poor fertility, lower milk yields, and even sudden death in severe cases. Subclinical infections are particularly costly, often going unnoticed while affecting animal performance.
Regular testing helps us understand the level of infection on farm and make informed treatment decisions, avoiding unnecessary use of flukicides and reducing the risk of resistance.

Timing is key

Testing in early autumn allows us to identify infections before they cause significant damage. If fluke is confirmed, treatment should be based on the stage of the parasite and the product's activity spectrum. Early infections require products active against immature fluke, whereas adult fluke can be treated with more targeted options later in the season.
What should you do?

Test regularly:

- Post-Mortem: Request your vet to carry out post-mortems on sheep or cattle—it's a valuable chance to identify signs of both current and past liver fluke infections.
- Blood Antibody ELISA Test: This test detects exposure to liver fluke and is especially useful in young animals during their first grazing season.
- Coproantigen ELISA Test: Performed on dung samples, this test is ideal for use in late autumn or winter. It can identify infections at an earlier stage than egg counts—typically providing a two- to three-week head start.
- Faecal Fluke Egg Count: This method only identifies infection when adult fluke are present and actively shedding eggs.
- Abattoir Feedback: When sending lambs or cull ewes to slaughter, ask for liver condition reports—this provides helpful insights into previous infection levels and how effectively fluke is being controlled on your farm.

Time treatments carefully:

Use products effective against identified fluke stage. For chronic adult infection in later winter/early spring, adulticides may be sufficient – speak to your vet first.

Manage pasture risk zones:

Fence off or avoid wet, snail-prone areas. Improving drainage and avoiding muddy congregating areas can limit exposure.

Monitor resistance:

Be aware of triclabendazole resistance. Verify efficacy by post-treatment testing 3–4 weeks later using faecal egg counts or coproantigen testing.

Given the combination of climate trends and later-season grazing, you should remain alert and act on the advice of SCOPS, COWS and NADIS to remain vigilant—monitor, test, and target control based on clear farm-level evidence.

The Market Hut

A reminder that we will be at Holsworthy Market every Wednesday morning

If you need to pick up medication from the market hut, please call the office, and we can arrange this for you.

Mastering Meds Course

with Matilda Herridge-Nowell

Thursday 11th December 10am

Red Tractor approved
At the Penbode Market Hut, Kivells Market, Holsworthy

Contact your branch to book your space or email jay.waylen@penbodevets.co.uk

MilkSure Course

Thursday 29th January 2026
11am – 2pm
Is your MilkSure (Part 1) training due?

Why should you take this course?
Farmers will benefit by:
✓ having fewer costly milk residue failures
✓ using medicines more effectively and therefore more efficiently
✓ fulfilling Red Tractor antibiotic regulations
✓ demonstrating to customers a clear commitment to producing pure, safe milk.

After this course you and your staff will:
✓ feel more in control of safeguarding your milk production
✓ know the three main areas which are risky and you will have the necessary
tools to avoid residue failures
✓ have fewer decisions to make
✓ have less doubt and better peace of mind.

Call your branch or email jay.waylen@penbodevets.co.uk to book your seats (please let us know of any dietary requirements)